

**John Mason from Thomas Jefferson, August 18, 1814 , from The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.**

**TO JOHN THOMPSON MASON J. MSS.**

Monticello Aug. 18. 14.

Dear Sir, —Your letter of May 5. was handed me by Dr. Wallace on the 25th of June, & I have added to the delay of answering it by waiting the arrival of the specimens of Mrs. Mason's skill in manufactures which your letter mentd. These (after various accidents of delay immaterial to explain) arrived yesterday, and excite the admiration of us all. They prove Mrs. Mason is really a more dangerous adversary to our British foes, than all our Generals. These attack the hostile armies only, she the source of their subsistence. What these do counts nothing because they take one day & lose another: what she does counts double, because what she takes from the enemy is added to us: I hope too she will have more followers than our Generals, but few rivals I fear. These specimens exceed any thing I saw during the revolutionary war; altho' our ladies of that day turned their whole efforts to these objects, & with great praise & success. The endeavors which Dr. Wallace informed you we were making in the same line, are very humble indeed. We have not as yet got beyond the cloathing of our laborers. We hope indeed soon to begin finer fabrics, and for higher uses. But these will probably be confined to cotton & wool. Our Spinning jennies working from 24. to 40. spindles each, produce an impatience of the single thread of the flaxwheel. 2. oz. of cotton for each spindle is a moderate day's work; and these, the simplest of machines, are made by our country joiners & kept in order by our overseers. Very different from the clockwork of Arkwright's machines whose tooth & pinion work

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requires a clockmaker to make & keep in repair. I have lately also seen the improvement of the loom by Janes, the most beautiful machine I have ever seen; wherein the hand which pulls the batten moves the shuttle, the treadles, the temples, the web and cloth beams, all at the same time; so that a person with one hand, & without feet, or using only one hand, may weave as well as with all their members. I am endeavoring to procure this improvement also.

These cares are certainly more pleasant than those of the state; and were happiness the only legitimate object the public councils would be deserted. That corvee once performed however the independent happiness of domestic life may rightfully be sought & enjoyed. Mrs. Randolph joins me in thanks and friendly respects to Mrs. Mason, and I add assurances of constant esteem & affection to yourself.